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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 002876

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STATE PLS PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AFR/SP
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA, USAID/REDSO, AND FAS
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
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NSC FOR PMARCHAM, MMAGAN, AND TSHORTLEY
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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [SU](#) [KHDP](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: DARFUR: NGOS RELOCATE STAFF FROM GEREIDA IDP CAMP

REF: A. REF A) KHARTOUM 0828
[1](#)B. B) KHARTOUM 0939
[1](#)C. C) KHARTOUM 2863

Classified By: DCM R. Powers, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

[1](#)1. (SBU) At approximately 2130 hours on December 18, armed men believed to be Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/Minawi) elements stole 14 vehicles from three compounds in Gereida, South Darfur. As a result, all humanitarian organizations except the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are suspending activities in Gereida, which is considered Africa's largest internally displaced persons (IDP) camp with 128,000 inhabitants. Organizations began relocating staff from Gereida on December 19. USAID is concerned that the reduction in humanitarian presence will hamstring the ability of the USG and the international community to provide assistance in the area. The provision of food and water may become more difficult if programs do not resume within several weeks. In combination with increased targeting of humanitarian assets and staff across Darfur since the beginning of December, we are witnessing a severe erosion of capacity to assist 4.3 million conflict-affected people in the region. End summary and comment.

SIMULTANEOUS RAIDS ON HUMANITARIAN COMPOUNDS

[1](#)2. (C) At approximately 2130 hours on December 18, armed men believed to be SLA/Minawi elements raided three humanitarian compounds in Gereida. Reports suggest that the assailants first attacked the ICRC compound, stealing two vehicles that were later returned. ICRC is still conducting an internal investigation to determine what actually happened, but will continue to provide health services in Gereida. (Comment: ICRC has been working in Gereida longer than any other international humanitarian organization. Some have speculated that ICRC's vehicles were returned because it is known that that ICRC will provide medical services to all wounded combatants. End comment.)

13. (C) Reports indicate that following the ICRC raid, the assailants simultaneously attacked two compounds: Oxfam and Action Contre la Faim (ACF). According to Oxfam, armed men demanded that the guard outside the Oxfam office turn over vehicle keys. The attackers apparently knew that the keys were located in the organization's logistics office. When the guard refused to comply, the men entered the office compound, where five vehicles were parked, and took the keys for those vehicles. The men continued searching for keys to a sixth vehicle and the vehicle itself, which was parked elsewhere. When the guard refused to share the whereabouts of the sixth vehicle, the men went to Oxfam's residential compound, where two international staff were present. The staff members fled to other NGO compounds. The assailants stole two Thuraya satellite telephones and ripped out the wiring in the office, but left other communications equipment. Oxfam is moving all relocatable and expatriate staff to Nyala. Even if staff were to remain, a single vehicle is insufficient for Oxfam to continue providing water, sanitation, and hygiene services to the camp. (Note: Oxfam (strictly protect) believes that a group of SLA/Minawi elements that may defect to the National Redemption Front (NRF) carried out the attacks. End note.)

14. (C) According to ACF, armed men entered the ACF guest house and physically assaulted ACF staff, including one expatriate. ACF staff reportedly recognized some of the assailants as belonging to SLA/Minawi. The men stole all seven ACF vehicles as well as communications equipment. ACF, a USAID partner elsewhere in Darfur, is the only organization that distributes food in Gereida in cooperation with the UN World Food Program (WFP). ACF has ceased operations in Gereida and will permanently withdraw its staff. The one

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international staff member targeted in the attack plans to leave Sudan.

15. (SBU) According to an NGO representative, at least one of the organizations that came under attack reportedly attempted to contact the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) via radio; however, AMIS did not respond to the calls for help.

16. (U) On December 19, humanitarian organizations working in Gereida decided to suspend operations and relocate staff. The organizations withdrawing include USAID partners Merlin and the American Refugee Committee, ZOA, Oxfam, and ACF. USAID partner CHF International plans to conduct a security assessment before determining whether to suspend operations and withdraw staff.

HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS

17. (SBU) With the suspension of nearly all programs in Gereida, the humanitarian successes threaten to reverse quickly. Although the camp population more than doubled in 2006, organizations managed to provide food, water, and other basic services to the new IDPs with limited resources and constant insecurity in the surrounding area.

18. (SBU) ACF reports that food commodities for December's distributions recently arrived and are currently in semi-permanent storage facilities known as Rubb Halls. ACF reports that WFP trucks en route to Gereida with food supplies for December distributions will return to Nyala. In the absence of a regular distribution and with the presence of Arab militias preventing agricultural activities outside the camp, USAID and ACF consider it likely that IDPs will loot the facility.

19. (SBU) Water provision is a key concern. Oxfam maintains the camp's water supply and provides the fuel necessary to operate the water system. Oxfam reports that there is enough

fuel in Gereida to power the water system for a maximum of two more weeks. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has spent USD 2 million on a camp water system, which Oxfam currently maintains.

COMMENT: TRENDS AND NEXT STEPS

¶10. (C) This is the first known simultaneous attack against humanitarian organizations in Darfur. The attackers demonstrated inside knowledge of NGO procedures, suggesting that armed groups are using this information to equip themselves more efficiently. This is the largest number of vehicles stolen in a single incident in Darfur since the conflict began three and one-half years ago. Including those taken in this event, more than 30 vehicles have been stolen in Darfur since December 1.

¶11. (SBU) Currently, only ICRC plans to remain in Gereida. USAID is concerned that with little humanitarian presence, it will be a significant challenge for the USG to provide aid to the IDP camp and local population. The USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) is prepared to fund ICRC for life-saving interventions should additional resources be necessary.
HUME